



**U.S. Army Corps  
of Engineers  
St. Paul District**

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**Public Affairs**

# **Corps Facts**

## **Devils Lake, N.D.**

### **Flood Reduction Project - Levee**

**July 22, 2004**

**FS-26**

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#### **Project Background**

Devils Lake is located in a closed basin in semi-arid northeastern North Dakota. Depending on climate patterns, lake levels may vary substantially. Since 1993, Devils Lake has risen more than 25 feet, flooding homes, roads, farmlands, utilities and railways, threatening several communities. During this period, the lake has expanded from 70 square miles to 206 square miles. The lake is now higher than at any time since the 1830s. Because of the high water, more than \$350 million in federal emergency response funding has been spent to relocate people, raise roads and build levees.

The lake reached its highest recorded level, 1,449 feet above mean sea level, in June 2004, and has caused more than \$300 million in flood related damages. The current levee system is about 7.2 miles in length with a top elevation of 1,457 feet above msl. Although referred to as levees, the system was actually designed and constructed as a dam to impound water for many decades. The existing levee provides protection from a lake elevation of 1,451 feet above msl with an additional six feet of freeboard as an extra safety measure and to protect against wave and ice action. Six pump stations are also incorporated into the project to pump interior drainage and runoff over the levees. The levees were built wide enough so they can be raised an additional three feet. The trigger elevation for initiating actions to complete the raise to 1,460 was 1,448 at freeze-up. This trigger point took into consideration the time required to complete the necessary actions to start construction and continue to provide protection from a 100-year rainfall event during the construction period through completion.

#### **Project Status**

The Corps of Engineers along with the City of Devils Lake, N.D., are expecting to begin construction on the Devils Lake Levee to an elevation of 1,460 feet above mean sea level this fall. The district advertised the construction contract for this work July 14, 2004, and is scheduled to award the contract late August of 2004. Currently, it is anticipated that construction would begin early September. The contractor would be required to work on specific, critical areas and complete them before winter freeze-up. Construction on the levees would continue through the summer of 2005 with an expected completion in the fall of 2005. The proposed construction would provide protection to a lake level of 1,454. To date, approximately \$43 million has been spent on the levee system. The raise to 1,460 is estimated at \$8.5 million.

#### **Authority**

Public Law 84-99, Advance Measures Program